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ABSTRACT

Benin is breaking new ground through a profound reform of its primary school system. The innovation in the system is the revolutionary approach as regards educational practice. The main focus has shifted, in the objectives of the curriculum, from what to teach to whom to empower. This paper analyzes the Reforme de l'ecole de qualite fondamentale (REQF) from the theoretical standpoint of complexity theory. The paper is an initial attempt to apply complexity theory to educational reform in a particular developing country, the Republic of Benin. It first gives an overview of the country and then discusses the REQF, noting that although USAID mainly sponsors the REQF logistically, the government of Benin is responsible for its conception, design, and development with the assistance of foreign consultants. The REQF designers refer to their new curriculum as "new study programs," and these programs have been implemented on an experimental basis in 30 public schools for 6 years, representing a full primary school cycle. The paper considers why educational reform is so difficult, and what makes a successful reform. Contains 23 notes. (BT)

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A COMPLEXITY THEORY ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN BENIN

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Benin is breaking new ground through a profound reform of its primary school system. The innovation in the system is the revolutionary approach as regards the educational practice. The main focus has shifted, in the objectives of the curriculum, from ***what to teach*** to ***whom to empower***. The French heritage defines an educated person after the diploma he[1] holds[2]. As such, the reform is breaking off from the century-long tradition of rote learning and book knowledge to a style that enables knowledge creation, skills acquisition and the development of new behaviors.

The goal of my presentation is to analyze the Réforme de l'ecole de qualité fondamentale—henceforth REQF—from the theoretical standpoint of complexity theory. Complexity theory originated in the natural sciences and was then widely adopted in the social sciences. Elliott and Kiel contend that,

> Chaos theory is the result of natural scientists' discoveries in the field of nonlinear dynamics. Nonlinear systems reveal dynamical behavior such that the relationships between variables are unstable. Furthermore, changes in these relationships are subject to positive feedback in which changes are amplified, breaking up existing structures and behavior and creating unexpected outcomes in the generation of new structure and behavior. These changes may result in new forms of equilibrium; novel forms of complexity; or even temporal behavior that appears random and devoid of order, the state of "chaos" in which uncertainty dominates and predictability breaks down.[3]

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[1] For speaking convenience, I will be using the generic masculine third person singular. That does not carry any gender discrimination.

[2] Sir Michael Sadler pointed out that "what a nation wants and expects from education is indicated by the kind of questions they are likely to ask about an individual. The German would ask "what does he know?"; the Frenchman, "what diploma or certificate does he hold?"; the Englishman, "what kind of a fellow is he?"; and the American, "what can he do?"" Education is thus strongly involved in the creation of those desired traits. In I. L. Kandel, "The Comparison of American and European School Systems," *Educational Forum*, November 1955. Benin is thus triggering a movement that goes far beyond only the scope of the education field. It also encompasses the very conception of what school is and its role in the construction of Benin society and nation.

[3] E. Elliott and L. D. Kiel, *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences, Foundations and Applications*, Ann Harbor, Mich: The University of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 1.

Michael Fullan applied complexity theory it to change in education.

> Complexity theory, Fullan suggests, claims that the link between cause and effect is difficult to trace, that change (planned or otherwise) unfolds in non linear ways, that paradoxes and contradictions abound and that creative solutions arise out of interaction under conditions of uncertainty, diversity and instability.[4]

In a nutshell, complexity theory advocates that nothing is to be taken for granted in complex societies and even more in terms of educational policy. Others' success stories may reveal a complete incompatibility in different contexts and commonly accepted norms may degenerate into insurmountable obstacles. My presentation is an initial attempt to apply complexity theory to educational reform in a particular developing country, the Republic of Benin.

BENIN COUNTRY OVERVIEW [5]

Since 1991, the growth of Benin's democratic institutions has made it a model for West Africa. Benin's commitment to political and economic liberalization is beyond question. Political and economic reform has become institutionalized and has taken root. The country has organized three consecutive presidential elections, the most recent in March 2001, that were free, fair and transparent, each making possible a smooth transfer of power. Such a record is almost without precedent in Africa and is the best evidence of the health of Benin's democratic institutions. Progress in democratization continues and it is not dependent on personalities. The legislative and judicial branches of government

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[4] M. Fullan, *Change Forces, The Sequel*, Philadelphia, Penn.: Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis Inc., 1999, p. 4.

[5] Adapted from USAID/BENIN, *Country Strategic Plan FY 1998-2003*, Cotonou, Benin: Imprimex, March 1998, pp.1-2.)

are alive and well and the constitutional court in particular exercises effective checks and balances against executive abuse of power. In this sub-region where countries have turned away from democracy and political liberalism, Benin is playing an important moderating role.

Benin has faithfully followed its structural adjustment program, and macroeconomic reforms have begun to take effect. Fiscal balance has been achieved, the market sets prices, and economic growth has averaged 5% over the five-year period of 1992-1997 while inflation has been stabilized at around 3%. These impressive reforms, however, have had a limited impact on poverty. Infant, child and maternal mortality rates, although falling, are among the highest in West Africa. Contraceptive prevalence is low, reported at 3.4% for modern methods by the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS, September 1996). This survey also reported a fertility rate of more than six children per woman and a population growth rate over 3.1 % per year. This means that Benin's population will double in less than 25 years, adversely affecting the gains of economic growth and placing stress on its limited social infrastructure. Illiteracy is estimated at 75% overall and 80% for women.

There are systemic problems as well. The government of Benin is only able to spend about 60% of its non-salary recurrent expense budget for education; for health, the rate is even lower. The underlying cause of weak absorptive capacity and low efficiency is deficient governance. At the micro level, government exists not to provide public services but to exercise power and authority. A national bureaucracy from the earlier

Marxist-Leninist period remains highly centralized, resists change, and is characterized by pervasive rent-seeking. Public officials are not easily held accountable by citizens, are poorly paid, lack incentives to serve the public good, often occupy a dual role in the private sector, and usually conduct their business under much less than transparent conditions. Planning, budgeting and audit mechanisms are very weak. Such are the constraints in the ministries of education and health, and these explain why the quality and quantity of basic education and health services are low. Deficient governance also explains why about 75% of the economy is in the informal sector. Until reliable mechanisms for accountability and a predictable legal and regulatory framework are put in place, prospects for increases in private investment and the growth of manufacturing are limited.

Because of the open political climate, Beninese discuss these issues in the public fora and criticize corruption in government. A free and lively press is not afraid to report on the performance of public officials.

The REQF

The REQF draws its legitimacy from the February 1990 National Conference and the subsequent Etats Généraux de l'Education which expressed the need to endow the country with an educational system that enables tomorrow's Beninese citizen to face the challenges of his time efficiently[6]. This is opposed to an image of the traditional system presenting the teaching process and its objective as a big bottle representing the teacher pouring knowledge into smaller ones being the learners. As better stated by Damien Alahassa, Minister of Education,

> *La préoccupation du gouvernement est d'assurer la formation du citoyen de demain: un citoyen autonome, intellectuellement et physiquement équilibré, capable d'entreprendre, de se prendre en charge et d'apprendre tout le long de sa vie, un citoyen respectueux de la personne humaine, de la verité et de la démocratie, animé d'un esprit de méthode, de coopération et du goût de la responsabilité, un citoyen gestionnaire de lui-même, gestionnaire de l'environnement et gestionnaire des situations de la vie sociale.*

The declaration of the minister indicates that the REQF is supported by a strong political will from the government of Benin.[8] Here, Benin is in a rather avant-garde position because the new profile of the end product of the school system completely

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[6] The National Conference was held in February 1990 and ousted the Marxist military regime. It launched the democratic renewal movement. The Etats Généraux de l'Education followed up and gathered all the participants in the educational world, including trade unions, teachers, parents, and even private sector employers.

[7] D. Alahassa, in *Programme d'études de l'enseignement primaire; champ de formation Français CI*, Porto Novo, Benin: Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education, Mai 1999, p. I. "The concern of the government of Benin is to guarantee the training of the citizen of tomorrow; a citizen who will be autonomous, intellectually and physically balanced, able to build himself up, to take himself in charge, a lifelong learner and a citizen respectful of the human person, truth, democracy, a citizen with a spirit of method, cooperation, and a sense of accountability, a citizen who is a good manager of himself, of the environment and of social life situations." (My translation).

[8] The government of Benin's commitment is clearly expressed in la *Déclaration de politique éducative* which was approved by the Council of Ministers as early as January 1991.

differs from the one advertised by the traditional school system still in force in the former French colonies.

The USAID mainly sponsors the REQF logistically. However, the government of Benin is responsible of its conception, design and development with the assistance of foreign consultants. It is based on a socio-constructive and cognitive epistemological approach, which suggests that the stress is laid on the acquisition of a knowledge, skills, and behavior that could be effectively used to confront the challenges of nation/society-building.[9]

Content design and teaching strategies

The REQF designers refer to their curriculum as *"new study programs" (nouveaux programmes d'études)*. They advocate the terms and the content are more effective than the former, *"teaching programs" (programmes d'enseignement)*. I give below a brief overview of the difference between the new study programs and the intermediate programs (old teaching programs).

INTERMEDIATE VERSUS NEW PROGRAMS[10]

[9] The school system is already yielding impressive results. As an example, one day we were out of running water and I was obliged to use water from the well. My fifth grade daughter came up and filtered the water. Then she instructed me that before anyone uses water from the well, they should filter it first. She has the knowledge, the know-how and the appropriate behavior for the circumstance. This is diametrically opposed to the former school system that stresses the acquisition of basics and diplomas (see note 2 above).

[10] The comparison between intermediate and new programs was translated from, D. Anago, *La Clé*, Lokossa: 1998, pp. 5-7.

Intermediate programs

- Teaching programs with instructions determining fuzzy objectives
- Teaching programs with disconnected content and little inner efficiency
- Essentially teacher/subject matter-oriented programs
- Knowledge acquisition is based on rote learning
- Evaluation focuses on matter and stresses competition among students
- Evaluation comes from the outside in
- Errors and cheating are severely punished
- The programs focus on knowledge but not on skills and behavior
- The student trained in such a perspective is not curious and panics once he finds himself in an unusual situation.

New Programs

- Study programs by objectives
- Integrated subjects and knowledge
- Student-centered programs
- Problem-solving approach
- Interactive learning (knowledge, learner, teacher, group) increases sociability
- Evaluation is personal, integrated in the learning process and focuses on knowledge, skills and behavior

- Study programs focus on skills as a means to acquire knowledge and develop new behavior
- Students are intellectually autonomous, prepared to face new situations, and able to reinvest their knowledge in solving problem
- Production of appropriate material
- Continuous in-service teacher training

The new study programs basically adopt a problem-solving approach. To do this, the previous 30 plus subjects from the traditional curriculum have been consolidated into six fields. For each learning situation, the students are offered a set of activities and tasks that allow them to construct desired results. Some guidelines have been suggested by the designers for a start to help plan the organization of each learning situation. The teacher has to ensure the availability of:

- Substance to acquire; this includes new knowledge, skills and behaviors
- Teaching/learning strategies; appropriate strategies for each problem-situation
- Time; duration allotted for each activity
- Material; appropriate material for each activity
- Evaluation; objective to be achieved by the activity.

The learner has to:

- Understand a problem-situation
- Solve the problem-situation using the data available

- Synthesize what has been learnt through an iterative and reflexive process.[11]

All the activities are student-centered. The student is challenged to learn independently. He will craft his own knowledge creation, investigation, and problem-solving mechanisms that he will perfect progressively along the way. The focus is much less on what the teacher has to teach than on what the student can or is going to do with what he has acquired/learned.

The teachers are viewed here as models, facilitators, and mediators since the classic *ex-cathedra* method has very little space left. The REQF requires a specialist of animation and supervision as a teacher. He will have to be available and help the students build their own knowledge rather than transmit his to them.[12]

Implementation

The new study programs have been implemented on an experimental basis in 30 pilot schools for six years, which represent a full primary school cycle. They have been in the active nationwide phase for the second year. They are supported on the field by intensive in-service teacher training, on-going student evaluation and tracking, and the production of appropriate school material as well as the creation of readers' networks.

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[11] Ministère de l'Education Nationale, *Les nouveaux programmes d'études de l'enseignement primaire: fondements, approches et stratégies*, Porto Novo, Benin: Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education, Mars 1999, p. 14.

[12] Op. Cit., pp. 18-19.

WHY IS EDUCATIONAL REFORM SO DIFFICULT?

Reforms are difficult because they involve one of the most complex parts of human activity, education. Educational reforms and system transfers are often judged feasible and implemented on the basis of their "goodness" and their "soundness" of objectives, and on success stories of others. However, the literature is replete with accounts of failure of such reforms and transfers, and with analyses showing the complexities of instituting change.[13] Reforms often fail because they are generally conceived and imposed from the top down. One of the flaws of the top down conception of change is the lack of consideration to the fact that the local structures build along the years their own internal logic that stands as their landmark and from which they cannot depart overnight for new miracle solutions. The designers of reforms are often too quick to make their decisions with little regard to the complexity of the *"grammar" of schooling*, the basic structural patterns which construct for almost all concerned a vision of what a "real school" is like, and which are consequently very difficult to change[14]. A successful reform must therefore be thought taking into account the complexity of the

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[13] For accounts showing that "good" and "sound" reforms, whether ideologically, politically, or economically driven, seldom replicate or are implemented successfully, see, *inter alia*: S. M. Stewart, "Nationalist Educational Reforms and Religious Schools in Trinidad," *Comparative Educational Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, June 1981; B. G. Massialas, "The Inquiring Activist," in B. G. Massialas, ed., *Political Youth, Traditional Schools: National and International Perspectives*, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972); M. T. Tatto, "Educational Reform and State Power in México: The Paradoxes of Decentralization," *Comparative Educational Review*, vol. 43, no 3, August 1999; D. N. Plank, The Politics of Basic Education Reform in Brazil, *Comparative Educational Review*, Vol. 34, no. 4, November 1990; V. Guézodjê, "Educational Reform in Benin," *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Education*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1977; J. Jansen, "The State and Curriculum in the Transition to Socialism: The Zimbabwean Experience," *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1 February 1991; R. Sack, "Quelle 'education pour quel développement?" *Afrique Contemporaine* No. 172, Numéro spécial: Crise de l'éducation en Afrique, Paris: La documentation française; Unesco, Analyses programmes et priorités de l'éducation africaine: un examen des études sur l'éducation en Afrique lancées, commandées et financées de l'extérieur, 1990-1994. Paris: Unesco, 1995.

structures that are going to nurture it. Those are hindrances Benin reform makers have to consider. This is discussed further ahead in my paper.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL REFORM?

Healey and De Stefano say that in terms of reforms, success stories are success stories because,

> (1) the reform addressed a well-understood local need, (2) there is a significant local demand for the reform, (3) the reform itself is locally derived, (4) it is championed by one or more 'messiahs', (5) it is adequately financed, and (6) there is wide spread ownership of the reform.[15]

In a similar vein, Joseph P. Farrell affirms that,

> (1) educational change of any consequence is inherently and necessarily intensely political and conflictual; (2) the "policy élites" who tend from their distant posts to devise and prescribe "one size fits all" educational solutions generally get it wrong; (3) accomplishing even modest educational change involves long hard work, with generally unpredictable results; (4) there are good reasons to believe that the basic "grammar" of schooling is resistant to quick fixes and visionary programs; (5) Changes that last and make a difference in learning generally come from the inside out rather than from the outside in or the top down.[16]

Healey and De Stefano as well as Farrell argue that successful reforms do not just happen. They obey complex rules that are dictated not only by aims and objectives, but mainly by the conditions of reform implementation. According to them, a decisive step toward the achievement of success is to take those complex rules into account at all levels of the educational reform process. Since the natural state in complex societies is confusion, it follows that those who are successful vigorously work at meaning making.

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[14] D. Tyack & L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia; A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), in J. P. Farrell, p. 96.

[15] F. Healey, and J. De Stephano, *Education Reform Support: A Clearinghouse for Basic Education* (Washington, D.C.: Abel 2 Clearinghouse for Basic Education, 1997), p. 10.

M. Fullan affirms that neither top down or bottom up strategies by themselves can achieve coherence—the top is too distant and the bottom too overwhelmed.[17] This is why Nonaka and Takeuchi conclude that middle managers like principals are essential as integrators and synthesizers.[18] This is also why Bryk *et al.* found that the Chicago schools who were most effective had principals who helped staff "attack incoherence, make connections, and focused on continuity from one program to another."[19] And again, this is why in Benin,

> Les directeurs d'école, piliers de la réforme en tant que gestionnaires pédagogiques, supporteraient les enseignants et enseignantes à s'approprier les nouveaux programmes d'études.[20]

THE REQF SEEN THROUGH THE LENSES OF COMPLEXITY THEORY

Selected supporters of complexity theory advocate the few criteria above for a successful reform and beforehand others point out why reforms are difficult. This segment of my presentation will study the REQF in the lights of those elements.

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[16] J. P. Farrell, "Why is Educational Reform So Difficult?" *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2000, p. 90.

[17] M. Fullan, *Change Forces, The Sequel*, Philadelphia, Penn.: Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis Inc., 1999, p. 27.

[18] I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 128.

[19] A. Bryk *et al.*, *Charting Chicago School Reform*, Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1998a, p. 69.

[20] Ministère de l'Education Nationale, *Les nouveaux programmes d'études de l'enseignement primaire: fondements, approches et stratégies*, Porto Novo, Benin: Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education, Mars 1999, p 37. "The principals as pedagogical managers are the pillars of the reform and as such will assist the teachers achieve a full command of the new study programs." (My translation).

Good Faith is not Enough

Educational reforms and system transfers are often judged feasible and implemented on the basis of their "goodness" and their "soundness" of objectives. The REQF complies with the conditions of "goodness" and "soundness." Its objectives are morally just. They look forward to constructing the citizen of the future with qualities, skills and behavior that guarantee fundamental freedoms, economic prosperity and the protection of the environment; a citizen that will be able to take up efficiently the challenges of his time. The reform is also well engineered on the terrain. All the teachers at the concerned levels are going through intensive training. School material is adequately provided. However, those conditions are not enough for the success of the reform. For national adhesion to be effective, the reform makers will have to dive deeper in the wheels of social engineering. The *"grammar" of schooling* is one aspect of them.

The "Grammar" of Schooling

Tyack and Cuban define the *"grammar" of schooling* as the basic structural patterns which construct for almost all concerned a vision of what a "real school" is like, and which are consequently very difficult to change. School in Benin is resilient to change. The poor results former reforms knew are very eloquent about that. There is some hostility to the new study programs because some of the outstanding features of the former teaching programs are not emphasized. Handwriting is very important and considered as one of the strongest character-building subjects. Students must also copy

their lessons and ingurgitate them by heart every evening. None of these is happening now. The new programs stress more practical knowledge and less bookwork. How the new programs will get in play and replace the former order is an open question for the future but is already a sensible point to keep an eye on for the success of the REQF.

Things that happen outside the classrooms are sometimes more important than things that happen inside of them and determine in a greater dimension the fate of school provisions. One of the most crucial points of the *"grammar" of schooling* in Benin is outside the classrooms—to give only one example. Benin is a former French colony and the USA spearheads the new programs. Let us recall what J. P. Farrell says: "educational change of any consequence is inherently and necessarily intensely political and conflictual." The REQF is even more conflictual because it is going to break an old, very old hegemony. What will it turn into in the long run? France has become very active at the secondary level sponsoring the Projet Maths-Français, the backbone of the secondary school level system. How the graduates of the primary school new programs fit in the secondary system is another interesting subject for further scrutiny.

Headmasters in the REQF

Headmasters have a capital role to play in the REQF. Its designers are well aware of it and put a special stress on it. (See note 15 above). The new study programs are time-consuming and demanding. My first observation is that beyond the polish of a formal façade, many are struggling with other matters and cannot afford to devote the time and energy they really need to sustain the work of the REQF. Trade Union claims and family

business often prevail on schoolwork. The headmasters are thus more lenient toward teachers who do not fully comply with the demand of the new programs. Besides, teachers at the grassroots level feel that they do not receive the full benefit for the extra load the new programs are putting on them. Salary/*per diem* claims are more threats to the REQF than the technical difficulties on the job itself. Those few instances jeopardize the REQF in that they obstruct the headmaster's job.

Budgeting Training Sessions

The new study programs brought along an unprecedented teacher-training plan. It is actually the first time ever in Benin and in the Sub-Saharan Africa that all the teaching force of the country—private or public—will be intensely trained for a new program. However most of the training sessions' budget is diverted in *per diem* and other *bonuses*. The teachers are happy with this but the real benefit that could be drawn from the training sessions like more extended sessions, documents or working material is mortgaged. This may weaken the real impact of the training in the long run. Moreover, teachers who go to training workshops, expecting the last day to come to collect their money may not fully focus on the message they are being delivered.

Advertising the REQF

One of the conditions for a reform to work is that there be a widespread ownership of it in its own environment.[21] Only a few people in the know can share information about the REQF. Basic information is scarce and in the hands of few very busy and unavailable people. The USAID mission, the Clef Project, or the Ifesh are all closely involved in the reform and have their resource centers but none has documents for the public about the REQF. *Le profile souhaité de l'écolier en fin de cours primaire*, e.g. is a document that determines the desired profile of the end product of the primary level school system. It should be in all the classrooms for the teachers and students to see and in all the houses for the parents and the community to know what the promise of the new programs is. Instead, it is an apocryphal document that is available nowhere but in an unfinished form at the INFRE (*Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education*). The new programs involve more than just the school practitioners. Their aim is to change the way school is conceived. This cannot be done only in schools. For others like researchers, students, teachers from other orders, and the community at large to adopt them, they need to know them first. The ignorance of the numerous benefits of the REQF will develop hostility and resistance to its advent.

What makes a successful reform

Healey and De Stefano say that in terms of reforms, success stories are success stories because,

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[21] See note 11 above.

> **(1) the reform addressed a well-understood local need, (2) there is a significant local demand for the reform, (3) the reform itself is locally derived, (4) it is championed by one or more 'messiahs', (5) it is adequately financed, and (6) there is wide spread ownership of the reform.**[22]

The REQF complies with the first two criteria because both the National Conference and the Etats Généraux de l'Education expressed the need for an educational system that opens the way to national development and prosperity. However, there still subsists some doubt whether common people understand the need for the reform.

Is the reform locally derived? Yes and no. At a conceptual level, the reform is designed by foreign consultants. But on the field it is implemented by local personnel.

Is the reform championed by one or more 'messiahs?' Everybody will agree that INFRE's Mr Labbé plays that role. However, it could prove to be a negative element because he is too much alone on the task so that people may develop hostility against the Labbé's reform. Were he a political charismatic figure, that would be better. A technician playing the "messiah" may reveal some weaknesses in the long run.

Is the reform adequately financed? For the time being, the reform is adequately financed. But it all depends on foreign aid through the USAID. What happens when the exterior source dies out for a reason or for the other?

Is there a wide ownership of the reform? For people to adopt the reform, they need to know it first and expect some benefits from its application. This does not seem to be the case with the REQF.

On his side, Joseph P. Farrell affirms that,

> **(1) educational change of any consequence is inherently and necessarily intensely political and conflictual; (2) the "policy élites" who tend from their distant posts to devise and prescribe "one size fits all" educational solutions generally get it wrong; (3) accomplishing even modest educational change involves long hard work, with generally unpredictable results; (4) there are good reasons to believe that the basic "grammar" of schooling is resistant to quick fixes and visionary programs; (5) Changes that last and make a difference in learning generally come from the inside out rather than from the outside in or the top down.**[23]

I have already discussed point one above.

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[22] F. Healey, and J. De Stephano, *Education Reform Support: A Clearinghouse for Basic Education* (Washington, D.C.: Abel 2 Clearinghouse for Basic Education, 1997), p. 10.

[23] J. P. Farrell, "Why is Educational Reform So Difficult?" *Curriculum Inquiry,* Vol. 30, No. 1, 2000, p. 90.

Point two brings to the fore one of the strengths of the REQF. Although the programs are centrally conceived, the teachers and the headmasters are enabled to adjust them locally.

Points three, four and five are rather indications the reform designers and implementers have to be aware of. Whether this is actually being done, I did not have any evidence of.

CONCLUSION

The REQF is a very advanced product in its geopolitical context, and as such, it will have to make its own way through adversity, old habits, resistance to change, and the fear of the unknown. The reform designers and implementers have to keep aware that such revolution does not just happen because it is backed up by political authorities and international aid. Besides all they have already been doing, they will have to develop the ability to assume complexity to face the everyday challenges of the reform and lead it to success.